

INFORMATION REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY Guatemala/Czechoslovakia

DATE DISTR. 21 Sep 50

SUBJECT Sale of Czechoslovakian Arms in Guatemala

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1. Through his connections in the Guatemalan Army, source learned that the Army wished to place an order for Czechoslovakian small arms and ammunition. At the same time, reference was made to a "previous shipment of Czechoslovakian arms" that had already arrived in Guatemala, but which the Army spokesman said had not been ordered by the Guatemalan Army. Source added that this was the first time he had heard of the "previous shipment" of Czechoslovakian arms into Guatemala.
2. On 29 August 1950, source acquired another bit of information which he believed might throw some light on the shipment in question. A friend of source had been talking with one Francisco Morales, a member of the Partido Accion Revolucionaria (PAR), and noticing that he was wearing a gun, asked to see it. Morales showed it to him, and source's friend noted that it was of Czechoslovakian manufacture, and that it was new. Morales said that the gun had cost the PAR about eighty or ninety dollars, and had been distributed by them to certain Party members. Morales added that the guns had arrived in Guatemala as a consignment of medical supplies directed to the Ministry of Public Health. Source said that in his opinion the arms probably had been shipped either out of Hamburg, Germany, to New York and thence to Puerto Barrios via the United Fruit Company, or out of Antwerp, Belgium, to the port of San Jose, Guatemala, via the French Line.

Comment: If Czechoslovakian arms were shipped to the Ministry of Public Health as medical supplies, it is curious that such precautions should be taken to disguise the shipment, since it would be perfectly legitimate for the Guatemalan government to buy arms from Czechoslovakia without such subterfuges. In the opinion of source, the possibility exists that the Guatemalan army refused to act as a cover for this purchase, and the authorities may have thought it best to disguise the shipment to keep its ultimate destination from becoming public knowledge.

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